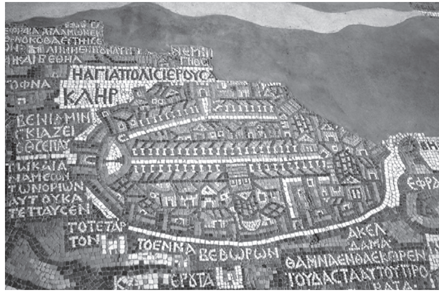

PATRISTIC STUDIES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

PROCEEDINGS OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO MARK THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PATRISTIC STUDIES

Edited by
Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony
Theodore de Bruyn
Carol Harrison

BREPOLS

© 2015 Brepols Publishers n.v., Turnhout, Belgium

All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted,
in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical,
photocopying, recording, or otherwise,
without prior permission of the publisher.

Cover picture:
Madaba Mosaic Map, *The Holy City of Jerusalem*
© Archivio Fondazione Terra Santa, Milano

D/2015/0095/153

ISBN 978-2-503-55919-3

Printed in the E.U. on acid-free paper

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Carol Harrison – Theodore de Bruyn
Introduction 9

KEYNOTE

Susan Ashbrook Harvey
Patristic Worlds 25

OVERVIEW OF PATRISTIC STUDIES

Martin Wallraff
Whose Fathers? An Overview of Patristic Studies in Europe 57

Marcin R. Wysocki
Between Western and Eastern Traditions: Polish Patristic Studies after World War II 73

Dennis Trout
The State of Patristics in North America 89

Francisco García Bazán
Los estudios patrísticos en Sudamérica y el Caribe 107

Satoshi Toda
Patristic Studies in East Asia (Mainly in Japan) 125

Bronwen Neil
Patristics in Australia: Current Status and Future Potential 145

Michel Willy Libambu
La contribution des études patristiques à la théologie africaine : L'étude des Pères de l'Église à l'école théologique de Kinshasa (1957-2013) 163

Adolph Martin Ritter
The Origins of AIEP 195

Angelo Di Berardino
The Development of the AIEP/IAPS 209

Jean-Noël Guinot
Éditer et traduire les écrits des Pères dans Sources Chrétiennes : *regard sur soixante-dix ans d'activité éditoriale* 221

PATRISTICS AND THE CONFLUENCE OF JEWISH, CHRISTIAN, AND MUSLIM CULTURES

Averil Cameron
Patristic Studies and the Emergence of Islam 249

Emanuel Fiano
The Construction of Ancient Jewish Christianity in the Twentieth Century: The Cases of Hans-Joachim Schoeps and Jean Daniélou 279

Timothy Pettipiece
Manichaeism at the Crossroads of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Traditions 299

PATRISTICS BETWEEN EASTERN AND WESTERN CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS

Columba Stewart osb
Patristics beyond 'East' and 'West' 317

Barbara Crostini
A Meeting-Point between East and West: Hesychius of Jerusalem and the Interpretation of the Psalter in Byzantium 343

PATRISTICS AND THEOLOGY

Christoph Markschies
Patristics and Theology: From Concordance and Conflict to Competition and Collaboration? 367

Lenka Karfíková
The Fifth Theological Oration of Gregory Nazianzen and the Historical Contingency of Revelation 389

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

Eimhin WALSH
Formation from the Fathers: The Place of Patristics in the Theological Education of Clergy 405

Reuven KIPERWASSER – Serge RUZER
Syriac Christians and Babylonian Jewery: Narratives and Identity Shaping in a Multi-Religious Setting 421

PATRISTICS, LITERATURE, AND HISTORIES OF THE BOOK

Mark VESSEY
'La patristique, c'est autre chose': *André Mandouze, Peter Brown, and the Avocations of Patristics as a Philological Science* 443

Dominique CÔTÉ
Les 'Pseudo-Clémentines' *et le choix du roman grec* 473

Tina DOLIDZE
Patristics – as Reflected in Georgian Spiritual and Intellectual History 497

Yonatan MOSS
The Rise and Function of the Holy Text in Late Antiquity: Severus of Antioch, the Babylonian Talmud, and Beyond 521

PATRISTICS AND ART

Robin M. JENSEN
Integrating Material and Visual Evidence into Early Christian Studies: Approaches, Benefits, and Potential Problems 549

Anne KARAHAN
Patristics and Byzantine Meta-Images: Molding Belief in the Divine from Written to Painted Theology 571

PATRISTICS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Bernard J. MULHOLLAND
Identification of Early Byzantine Constantinopolitan, Syrian, and Roman Church Plans in the Levant and Some Possible Consequences 597

Eirini PANOU
The Church of Mary in the Probatic Pool and the Haghiasmata of Constantinople 635

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

PATRISTICS AND THE CONFLUENCE OF JEWISH, CHRISTIAN, AND MUSLIM CULTURES

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

AVERIL CAMERON
Oxford

PATRISTIC STUDIES AND THE EMERGENCE OF ISLAM

What has Islam to do with patristic studies, and what can patristic studies contribute to our understanding of early Islam? In Jerusalem, in the context of a conference concerned with the discipline of patristic studies, these seem to be questions worth asking. For the most part, scholars of early Islam and of the Qur'an, and patristic scholars, seem to operate in different worlds. Not only are disciplinary boundaries maintained but also methodologies, questions and approaches. I was first struck by this in the 1980s, not in relation to patristic studies, but to late antique history, when I joined with two colleagues in Arabic and in Islamic archaeology to set up a series of workshops and a publication series that became *Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*. Our aim was rather simple – to come together and learn from each other. Many volumes have been published in the series since then.[1] However, theology, of a patristic sort, did not feature very much in our enterprise, and a companion series, *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*,[2] does not cover patristic themes.

What then do patristics and early Islam have to do with each other? I have noticed that in the annual bulletin of the International Association of Patristic Studies there are no sections on

[1] Edited by L. I. Conrad, J. Scheiner, Princeton, NJ, currently running to 24 volumes; sadly the volume that should have collected workshop papers on culture and religion has not appeared.

[2] Also edited by L. I. Conrad, also far running to 24 titles, but published by Ashgate.

10.1484/J.BAIEP.5.107521

Christianity, or patristics, and Islam (unlike the section on Christianity and Judaism). Yet the question of connection seems all the more worth asking now, when one can detect a distinct current trend towards seeing the emergence of Islam as a phenomenon of late antiquity, and Islam not as a sudden eruption from the deserts of Arabia, but also as a product – in whatever way – of the religious framework of the eastern Mediterranean. We can see this trend among historians of late antiquity and among scholars of the Qur'an and early Islam alike: take for instance a recent publication, the *Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, published in 2012, where we find a chapter by Robert Hoyland with the title 'Early Islam as a late antique religion',[3] in which Hoyland lists one by one the features of early Islam that in his opinion are characteristic of late antiquity. It is also commonly stated that Islam was a product of the so-called 'Judaeo-Christian' world. One does not have to look as far as the well-known sceptical studies of early Islam by scholars such as John Wansborough, Gerald Hawting or Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, whose book *Hagarism* came out in 1977,[4] when such current works on the Qur'an as those by scholars such as Angelika Neuwirth or Gabriel Reynolds are also thinking in terms of a late antique context.[5] Within late antique scholarship there has been a decisive turn to the east, to the mixed and culturally and linguistically rich world of the eastern Mediterranean and eastern Christianity; within such a perspective, not only does Byzantium itself seem faraway, but is also hard to accommodate in the new historical scenarios. A recent book by Garth Fowden places the emergence of Islam within an expanded late antiquity that con-

[3] R. G. Hoyland, 'Islam as a late antique religion', in *Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* – ed. S. F. Johnson, New York, 2012, p. 1053-1077.

[4] P. Crone, M. Cook, *Hagarism. The Making of the Islamic World*, Cambridge, 1977; cfr. J. E. Wansborough, *The Sectarian Milieu. Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*, Oxford, 1978; G. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam. From Polemic to History*, Cambridge, 1999.

[5] *The Qur'an in its Historical Context* – ed. G. S. Reynolds, London, 2008; *New Perspectives on the Qur'an. The Qur'an in its Historical Context 2* – ed. G. S. Reynolds, London, 2011; A. Neuwirth, *Der Koran als Text der Spätantike. Ein europäischer Zugang*, Berlin, 2010; *The Qur'an in Context. Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'anic Milieu* – ed. A. Neuwirth, N. Sinai, M. Marx, Leiden, 2010.

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

tinued, in his view, even as late as the first millennium. A very different book by Aziz al-Azmeh is entitled, uncompromisingly, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity.*[6] Its author, a specialist in Arabic and Islam, argues for a 'Palaeo-Muslim' phase deeply embedded in the religious milieu of late antiquity.[7] In this powerful book he too argues for Islam as a product of late antiquity and places a strong emphasis on the shared concept of universal empire. The establishment of university chairs in the study of the 'Abrahamic religions', as has happened recently for instance at both Oxford and Cambridge, indicates another current tendency, whereby the similarities, rather than the differences, between Judaism, Christianity and Islam are made the focus of exploration.[8] In the latter context, the implications of monotheism have become a central topic.[9] Against such a background, the question that has been neglected up to now, of what if anything patristic studies can contribute to the discussion, seems a very pressing one.

There may be several reasons why it has not been raised in this form before. The first relates to the prevailing discipline of late antique studies or late antique history, to which Christian materials are of course basic, but which rarely engages in theological, or what we might call patristic issues as such, leaving these for

[6] G. Fowden, *Before and After Muhammad. The First Millenium Refocused,* Princeton, 2013; cfr. Fowden, 'The Umayyad horizon', *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 25.2 (2012), p. 974-982. Cfr. A. al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allah and His People*, Cambridge, 2014.

[7] A. al-Azmeh, *Rom, das Neue Rom und Baghdad. Pfade der Spätantike*, Carl Heinrich Becker Lecture 2008, Berlin, 2008. However al-Azmeh sees the Christian elements as 'sedimentary fragments of early Christianity ... preserved in the fringe' (p. 70).

[8] Indeed, Guy Stroumsa, the first holder of the Oxford chair, has addressed some of my present questions in a recent paper, though from the different perspective of a historian of religions and ideas: see G. G. Stroumsa, 'Athens, Jerusalem and Mecca: the patristic crucible of the Abrahamic religions', *Studia Patristica*, 62.10 (2013), p. 153-168, delivered as the opening lecture at the 16th International Patristic Conference in Oxford in 2011; he remarks at p. 156 that 'patristic literature, in particular, offers a major, if undervalued, testimony to the background of the Qur'anic view of Abraham and of its religion', in 'a kind of *praeparatio islamica*', in which 'central tenets of the new religion were already incipient in late antique patterns of thought and behaviour'.

[9] Already raised by G. Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth. Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, Princeton, 1993, and see below. Al-Azmeh downplays the theme, as also patristic and Jewish 'influences'.

'theology', or, after a certain chronological point, to specialist historians or theologians of the Orthodox church. Another reason is the well-known slowness with which Christians of the seventh and eighth centuries seem to have engaged with Islam as a new religion, or, if and when they did, their apparent lack of detailed knowledge. The famous chapter on Islam added to John of Damascus's *On heresies* has often been cited as a case in point, all the more surprising if John had the upbringing in Umayyad Damascus ascribed to him in later hagiography.[10] One of the earliest indications of knowledge of specifically Qur'anic themes is found in the *Hodegos* of Anastasius of Sinai of the late seventh century.[11] Anastasius travelled extensively, and his writings also contain references to Muslims and to Muslim building in Jerusalem. As one would of course expect, awareness of Muslims is also apparent in other seventh-century writings, but it is harder to find Christians engaging with specific teachings.

The problem of this chronological gap has been discussed many times, and awareness of what seems to a modern observer to be a rather surprising fact has perhaps also had the effect of discouraging a closer engagement by patristic scholars with actual scholarship on early Islam – and certainly of course vice versa. Put another way, the search for 'sources' about early Islam, the intense discussion of its earliest phase of historical development and the excellent recent work done from this point of view on the non-Muslim sources by Robert Hoyland and others,[12] has tended to obscure the sorts of questions which might be of most interest to patristic scholars. The dating of surviving

[10] R. Le Coz, *Jean Damascène. Écrits sur l'Islam* (*SC,* 383)*,* Paris, 1992. John of Damascus's treatment of Islam as a Christian heresy is perfectly understandable in the context of his *On heresies* and its debts to earlier heresiological writing, as Guy Stroumsa has also brought out: G. G. Stroumsa, 'Barbarians or heretics? Jews and Arabs in the mind of Byzantium (fourth to eighth centuries)', in *Jews in Byzantium. Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures* – ed. R. Bonfil et al., Leiden, 2012, p. 761-776, in partic. p. 772-774.

[11] See S. H. Griffith, 'Anastasius of Sinai, the *Hodegos* and the Muslims', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review,* 32.4 (1987), p. 341-358.

[12] See R. G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It. A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (*Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, 13), Princeton, 1997.

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

works is also a key factor, and again, it is not surprising to find that awareness increases in the late seventh and eighth centuries.[13] Investigating Christian-Muslim awareness in that period is very different from positing Christian influences on the very earliest stages of Muhammad's teaching and its expression in the Qur'an. Finally, we must recognize that a different, but substantial, proportion of the scholarship on Christian and Muslim relations in the early period springs from an inter-faith and inter-confessional context.[14] Understandable though it is, this too can act as a determinant of the questions that are asked, or at least constitute a particular set of objectives.

There is at present a renewed and intense interest in the origins of Islam, not only among Qur'anic scholars, but also as historians of late antiquity bring the early Islamic period into their purview. I need hardly say that such an enterprise is fraught with difficulties, not least because the Qur'an itself tells us so little about the historical background from which it sprang that the subject has lent itself to some very radical re-interpretation, including the hypothesis, published under a pseudonym, that it originated in a Christian milieu and found expression in Syrian Aramaic rather than Arabic.[15] It is not surprising if, on the one hand, many scholars have and still do accept the basic version presented in the later Arabic sources, the *hadith* and the *sira*, or if they have turned, on the other, like Crone and Cook, to what can be gleaned from the non-Muslim contemporary sources. Even accepting an Arabian context for the Qur'an (which is now

[13] See for instance V. Déroche, 'Polémique anti-Judaïque et emergence de l'Islam (viie-viiie siècles)', *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 57 (1999), p. 141-161.

[14] See for instance *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam* – ed. E. Grypeou, M. Swanson, D. Thomas, Leiden, 2006; *Christians and Muslims in Dialogue in the Islamic Orient of the Middle Ages* – ed. M. Tamcke, Beirut, Würzburg, 2007, and especially the major work of David Thomas, Professor of Christianity and Islam, and Nadir Dinshaw, Professor of Interreligious Relations, at the University of Birmingham, as editors of the series *The History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, published by Brill, with the five-volume *Christian and Muslim Relations, a Bibliographical History*, also published by Brill, Leiden, 2009-2013.

[15] C. Luxenburg, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran. Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koranssprache*, rev. ed., Berlin, 2004. For English translation, see Id., *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran: A Contribution to the Decoding of the Language of the Koran*, Berlin, 2007.

far from being generally agreed), it is often stated that we know much more about Judaea and Palestine in the first century than we do about Arabia in the early seventh.

However, recent scholarship does in fact have something to contribute on the penetration of Arabia by Christianity. Furthermore, we also now know from recent scholarship much more about Christianity in the Sasanian empire. It was not simply a matter of a possible encounter with the Greek and Syriac-speaking Christians of the Byzantine empire, previously written off in many accounts as dominated by Monophysites/Miaphysites who were supposed to have welcomed the Arabs because of alienation from the imperial religion of Constantinople. Nor is there any need nowadays to rely on the traditional figure of a Nestorian monk as the likely source of Christian material in the Qur'an. Christians themselves were on the move. A recent study by Joel Walker has revealed the extent of formal religious debates both between Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians, and between Christians themselves, sponsored by the Sasanian court, and he and others have written about the travels of East and West Christian holy men in the Sasanian empire.[16] The *Spiritual Meadow* by John Moschus indicates a dense world of monastic travel within the Roman empire itself.[17] Inside the Sasanian empire, the School of Nisibis produced a line of Christian scholars, exegetes and wandering scholars. It clearly had a scriptorium, as did the Christian monastery founded by Chosroes II at Hulwan in western Iran,[18] while the East Syrian monastery at

[16] J. T. Walker, *The Legend of Mar Qardagh. Narrative and Christian Heroism in Late Antique Iraq*, Berkeley, 2006; see also P. Wood, *'We have no King but Christ.' Christian Political Thought in Greater Syria on the Eve of the Arab Conquest (c. 400-585)*, Oxford, 2010; Averil Cameron, *Dialoguing in Late Antiquity*, Washington, D.C., 2014, chapter 2.

[17] See P. Booth, *Crisis of Empire. Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Antiquity*, Berkeley, 2013.

[18] Walker, *The Legend of Mar Qardagh*, p. 329-330. On learning at Qenneshre in Mesopotamia: J. Tannous, 'You are what you read. Qenneshre and the Miaphysite church in the seventh century', in *History and Identity in the Late Antique Near East* – ed. P. Wood, Oxford, 2013, p. 83-102. On Christian Arabs in the Roman empire before Islam, and for the term 'Arab', see now F. Millar, *Religion, Language and Community in the Roman Near East. Constantine to Muhammad*, Oxford, 2014, p. 138-151, with R. G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs. From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, Oxford, 2001.

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

Kharg in the Persian Gulf had a library with wall niches to hold its books.[19]

Probably the most striking development has been in recent scholarship on the kingdom of Himyar in South Yemen (south-west Arabia), which is richly documented in inscriptions and written texts. In the early sixth century this kingdom had a Jewish ruler, who instigated a pogrom of Christians (who had long been established in the kingdom). It provoked a joint expedition from Byzantium and the Christian kingdom of Ethiopia (Axum) across the Red Sea, which established a fifty-year period of Christian rule in the mid-sixth century, which only came to an end when the Sasanians took over in 570 – the traditional year of the birth of Muhammad. There is a wealth of recent scholarship on these events and on the kingdom of Himyar, mainly in French, led by the work of Christian Robin.[20] Glen Bowersock has also recently presented it briefly in two short books in English.[21] The point is that a Christian kingdom existed in southern Arabia during the sixth century, and indeed the sources suggest that the king in that period tried to extend his influence into central Arabia, or even on some accounts, to Mecca. Archaeological evidence also exists of monasteries and Christian settlement in the Gulf and the islands.[22] It is not necessary to

[19] M.-J. Steve, *L'île de Kharg: une page de l'histoire du Golfe Persique et du monachisme oriental*, Neuchâtel, 2003.

[20] Recently C. Robin, 'Arabia and Ethiopia', in *Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* – ed. S.F. Johnson, p. 247-332, and see I. Gajda, *Le royaume de Himyar à l'époque monothéiste*, Paris, 2009; *Juifs et chrétiens en Arabie aux Ve et VIe siècles: regards croisés sur les sources* (*Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, monographies* 32, *Le massacre de Najran* II) – ed. J. Beaucamp, F. Briquel-Chatonnet, C.J. Robin, Paris, 2010.

[21] G.W. Bowersock, *Empires in Collision in Late Antiquity* (*The Menahem Stern Jerusalem Lectures 2011*), Waltham, MA, 2012. Also Id., *The Throne of Adulis. Red Sea Wars on the Eve of Islam*, New York, 2013.

[22] M. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, Princeton, 1984, Introduction; D. Potts, *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity*, 2 vols., Oxford, 1990, II; G.R.D. King, 'Settlement in western and central Arabia and the Gulf in the sixth-eighth centuries A.D.', in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, II: *Land Use and Settlement Patterns* – ed. G.R.D. King, A. Cameron, Princeton, 1994, p. 181-212; T. Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam. Verbreitung und konfessionelle Zugehörigkeit: eine Hinführung (Eastern Christian Studies*, 7), Leuven, Dudley, MA, 2007; B. Finster, 'Arabia in late antiquity: an outline of the cultural situation in the peninsula at the time of Muhammad', in *The Qur'an in Context* – ed. A. Neuwirth, N. Sinai, N. Marx, p. 61-107.

look for evidence of a Christian community in Mecca, as some do, to find possible connections. Many levels of contact were both possible and likely.

My point is that even Arabia (if indeed that is where Islam took shape), and certainly the Sasanian empire, were both penetrated by forms of Christianity in the sixth and seventh centuries.[23] In the case of the Sasanian empire, Christians, including both east and west Syrians, formed a substantial part of the population, including the elites. We sometimes tend to think that the Byzantine and Sasanian spheres were insulated from each other. In fact during the sixth-century wars between the two, even before the conquest of the Near East by the Sasanians in the early seventh century, the Sasanians often penetrated far into Byzantine territory, especially Syria and Mesopotamia, and as far as the great city of Antioch. Finally, Chosroes II, shah of Persia in the late sixth and early seventh centuries, was highly sympathetic to Christianity, had a Christian wife, and was a generous patron of the shrine of St Sergius at Resafa in Syria.

The point of this historical diversion is to emphasise that scholars often operate within divisions and categories that are much too sharp, a situation which is reinforced or even dictated by disciplinary boundaries. I have noticed for instance that some of the most central contributions from within the field of Islamic or Qur'anic studies which argue for a late antique context do so without actually engaging with the deluge of late antique scholarship in recent years. And of course it also goes without saying that not many late antique scholars actually engage with Qur'anic or early Islamic scholarship either.

In recent work I have adopted a different model, referring to the late sixth and seventh centuries in the near East as 'a region in ferment', or 'the turbulent seventh century'.[24] These descriptions do not merely concern political and military events, but also religious currents. Nor do they simply refer to the well-known religious reactions by Jews and Christians to the Persian

[23] Again, the importance of this is denied in AL-AZMEH, *The Emergence of Islam*.

[24] AVERIL CAMERON, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity, AD 395-700*, rev. ed., London, 2011, chapter 8; *Late Antiquity on the Eve of Islam* – ed. Averil Cameron, Farnham, 2013, p. xxv.

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

conquest of the Near East, and especially to the Persian control of Jerusalem in 614,[25] or to the Arab conquests and the arrival of Islam. I use them rather to refer to the widespread and complex religious developments, debates, and divisions that were already taking place and that continued to take place alongside such momentous public events.

The momentous changes in the political contours of the eastern Mediterranean that were taking place in the early seventh century happened simultaneously with intense theological and especially Christological debates and divisions which affected the entire Mediterranean world. Even while the Byzantines and the Arabs started to confront each other in the near East, in Anatolia and in Egypt and North Africa in the seventh century, these divisions continued to occupy the attention of emperors and churchmen alike in Constantinople, Carthage, Rome, and the East. In the 630s, the very decade of the first Arab incursions into Syria, the Emperor Heraclius held discussions with Monophysites at Hierapolis, with Armenians at Theodosiopolis, and with Monophysites again in Egypt, all with the aim of bringing these groups together – and with some success. The doctrines of one operation and one will in Christ dominated the middle years of the seventh century, but further discussions also continued with the Armenians at Dvin in 653 under Constans II.[26] It is at least as legitimate to bring some of these contemporary theological concerns into play when trying to understand the contours of early Islam as it is to adopt the strategies currently favoured among Islamicists of appealing to a generalized monotheism, or to a generalized apocalyptic tendency, or positing the existence, and indeed the major importance among the early Believers, of otherwise unattested groups who might have been possible conduits.

As already remarked, any attempt to locate the emergence of Islam in a late antique context has to contend with the formidable difficulties inherent in the Qur'an itself – curiously

[25] See A. M. Sivertsev, *Judaism and Imperial Ideology in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge, 2011.

[26] The origins and development of Monothelitism are currently receiving new attention: R. Price, 'Monothelitism: a heresy or a form of words?', *Studia Patristica*, 48 (2010), p. 221-232, and see Booth, *Crisis of Empire*.

silent about the actual location of Muhammad's message, and extremely hard to date as a religious document, yet suffused with Jewish and Christian elements. I have tried to suggest first that even if the traditional account of its origin in Arabia is accepted, there were multiple ways in which these elements could have been absorbed and reused. The polytheist pagan environment in Arabia depicted in the later Arabic sources, which has been accepted on its own terms by many scholars in the past, does not cohere with what we actually know now. Moreover, the extent and spread of Arab Christianity before Islam also needs to be emphasized.[27] Even on the traditional view that the Qur'an was written down and edited in the middle of the seventh century in Syria, this would have taken place in a context suffused with existing religious rivalries and discussions. Other views, for instance accepted in a recent book by Stephen Shoemaker,[28] place the editing later, under 'Abd al-Malik; but then too it would have taken place amid a heady mix of Christian and Jewish elements in late seventh-century Syria. More radical critics, as we have seen, locate the evolution of the message completely outside Arabia, and indeed as emerging not out of an Arabian context at all.

With this background, let us look at the arguments for a late antique context that are being offered by specialists on the Qur'an and early Islam. Prominent among them are appeals first to existing monotheistic ideas, then to the prevalence of eschatology in the contemporary Near East, then to the alleged presence of non-Trinitarian Christians, whose beliefs might account for the way in which Jesus is presented in the Qur'an – as a prophet, but in no way as divine. A recent book published in 2010 by one of the most prominent scholars of early Islam, Fred Donner,[29] posits the widespread existence (and membership in the earliest

[27] Above, and see G. Fisher, *Between Empires. Arabs, Romans and Sasanians in Late Antiquity*, Oxford, 2011, and the multi-volume work of I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs*, Washington, D.C., (1984-).

[28] S. Shoemaker, *Death of a Prophet*, Philadelphia, 2012 (with whose denial of Christianity in Arabia, however, not based on archaeological or epigraphic evidence, I part company); see also S. Shoemaker, 'Muhammad and the Qur'an', in *Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* – ed. S. F. Johnson, p. 1078-1108.

[29] F. M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers. At the Origins of Islam*, Cambridge, MA, 2010.

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

Islamic community) of such 'non-Trinitarian Christians', who were among the first Believers and presumably brought some of these ideas with them.

The problem I have also applies to some other recent writing, namely that Donner writes exclusively from within his own discipline, and does not even try to pin down his assumption within the actual historical context of late antiquity. We are not given evidence for the existence or the role of the 'non-Trinitarian' Christians posited by Donner, and their identity remains as obscure as that of several groups mentioned in the Qur'an, on which scholars still disagree. As for the 'Jewish Christians' who have been posited as having influenced Qur'anic thought, in my view their very existence in this period is highly dubious. They feature in earlier heresiology, but to my knowledge are not mentioned as such in any reliable historical source in late antiquity. Indeed, we owe the evolution of the concept of Jewish Christianity itself to New Testament scholars and theologians of early Christianity, not to historians of late antiquity.[30] Here I must take issue with my respected friend Guy Stroumsa, who has argued for their likely continued existence in several recent articles.[31] Stroumsa fully admits the lack of historical evidence for the period, but appeals to 'indirect' sources and commonsense, and places some weight on a reference by John of Damascus to Elkasites and Sampseans. In his

[30] For instance, F. De Blois, 'Islam in its Arabian context', in *The Qur'an in Context* – ed. A. Neuwirth, N. Sinai, M. Marx, Leiden, 2010, p. 615-623, in partic. p. 622; Id., 'Elchasai – Manes – Muhammad: Manichäismus und Islam inreligionshistorischen Vergleich', *Der Islam*, 81 (2004), p. 31-48; J. Gager, 'Did Jewish-Christians see the rise of Islam?', in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* – ed. A. H. Becker, A. Yoshiko Reed, Tübingen, 2003, p. 361-372. [See the paper by Emmanuel Fiano in this volume].

[31] G. G. Stroumsa, 'False prophets of early Christianity', in *Priests and Prophets among Pagans, Jews and Christians* – ed. B. Dignas, R. Parker, G. G. Stroumsa, Leuven, 2013, p. 208-232; Id., 'Jewish Christianity and Islamic origins', in *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Patricia Crone* – ed. B. Sadeghi et al., Leiden, 2014, p. 72-96; cfr. his 'Athens, Jerusalem, Mecca', p. 166: 'it stands to reason that Jewish Christians, whom we know (sic) were still in existence in the seventh century, and also, perhaps, "Abrahamists", must be counted among these proximate channels'. Despite this respectful disagreement I must record my deep appreciation to Guy Stroumsa for his kindness and inspiration, especially, but needless to say not only, during his years in Oxford.

catalogue of heresies, John follows Epiphanius very closely; he equates the Elkasites with the Sampseans, who are like the Ebionites, but adds that the Sampseans live 'until now' on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea.[32] This would in any case take us to the eighth century, while the identity of groups such as 'Sampseans', 'Elkasites' and the like, not to mention 'Sabians', Nazoraioi and others in the Qur'anic context, is hotly contested. In my view, both the highly derivative nature of John of Damascus's *On heresies*, and its theological rather than historical nature, make it dangerous to rely on this single remark, and particularly so when, as we have seen, Jews and Christians were very far from unknown in the context of Arabia in late antiquity.

The Jewish elements in the Qur'an are undoubtedly strong, as also are the Christian ones, but positing their sources by speculating on the basis of controversial references within the Qur'anic text itself is an equally hazardous business. I agree with Robert Hoyland about the methodological risks when he writes that 'scholars tend to assume, where the Qur'an offers a version of a story or a doctrine that does not conform to the official version, that [...] it reflects the views of some heretical sect that has survived in Arabia. More likely, it is just that it gives us a hint of the broad array of narratives and beliefs that existed below the level of canonized and codified texts.'[33] This leaves us with monotheism and apocalyptic, or perhaps better, eschatology.

The first appears in current scholarship in terms of references to a rising tide of monotheism in the late antique Near East, which is adduced to provide a context for the Qur'anic insistence on one God alone. We find this mode of argument not only among Qur'anic scholars and Islamists (and Patricia Crone now argues that the pre-Islamic pagans were monotheist),[34] but also among late antique historians (a *laboratoire* of the CNRS

[32] *De haer.* 34 (heresy 53), cited by Stroumsa, 'False prophets', p. 227.

[33] Hoyland, 'Early Islam as a late antique religion', p. 1872; on the dangers within this methodology, see also S. H. Griffith, 'Al-Nasara in the Qur'an: a hermeneutical reflection', in *New Perspectives on the Qur'an* – ed. G. S. Reynolds, p. 1-38; *Late Antiquity on the Eve of Islam* – ed. A. Cameron, p. xxix-xxx.

[34] P. Crone, 'The religion of the Qur'anic pagans: God and the lesser deities', *Arabica*, 57 (2010), p. 151-200.

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

now exists in Paris to study ancient monotheisms), and it has been given more credence by the emphasis recently laid on the seemingly monotheistic inscriptions of Himyar.[35] According to the sadly deceased American historian Thomas Sizgorich, there was 'a semiotic *koine* of monotheistic religiosity within which Islamic narratives took shape'.[36]

However, the concept of a 'pagan monotheism', applied to Greco-Roman religion, has also come under criticism.[37] As for its applicability to Christianity in late antiquity, suffice it perhaps to say that this was also the very period when within Christianity the cult of saints and the veneration of relics, and indeed images, were proliferating, and to remind ourselves that the strongest message of the Qur'an in relation to Christianity is to assert that God cannot be divided, and God cannot have a son; this suggests that there was not *enough* monotheism, rather than that the Qur'an was tapping in to an existing trend. There were many voices of anxiety within Christianity itself, and what modern scholars perceive as Christian monotheism must also have looked very different from outside.

Finally, apocalyptic.[38] Stephen Shoemaker, himself a patristic scholar who has also written about early Islam, has recently provided a vigorous reassertion of the argument that the pri-

[35] For pagan monotheism, and generally, see *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* – ed. P. Athanassiadi, M. Frede, Oxford, 1999; *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* – ed. S. Mitchell, P. Van Nuffelen, Cambridge, 2010; *Monotheism between Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity* – ed. S. Mitchell, P. Van Nuffelen, Leuven, 2010; P. Athanassiadi, *La lutte pour l'orthodoxie dans le platonisme tardif de Numénius à Damascius*, Paris, 2006; G. W. Bowersock, 'Polytheism and monotheism in Arabia and the three Palestines', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers,* 51 (1997), p. 1-10. Among Islamicists, see Crone, 'The religion of the Qur'anic pagans', referring to 'the monotheistic trend', p. 185-88; G. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam*, Cambridge, 1999; Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, e.g. at p. 87, cfr. p. 59 'the idea of monotheism was already well established throughout the Near East, including Arabia, in Muhammad's day'; also F. M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins. The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*, Princeton, 1998.

[36] T. Sizgorich, 'Narrative and community in Islamic late antiquity', *Past and Present*, 185.1 (2004), p. 9-42.

[37] See the review of *One God. Pagan Monotheism in the Roman* – ed. S. Mitchell, P. Van Nuffelen, by C. Addey, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 101 (2011), p. 259-260.

[38] On this see further Averil Cameron, 'Late antique apocalyptic: a context for the Qur'an?', in *Visions of the End* – ed. E. Grypeou, Leuven, forthcoming.

mary message of Muhammad was to proclaim the imminence of the Hour – the end of things, when all would be judged.[39] This is not the place to discuss the alternative view, which sees Muhammad as primarily a social and moral reformer, but Shoemaker's emphasis on the imminence of the Hour chimes in with statements common in current scholarship to the effect that, as in the case of monotheism, there was also a general trend towards apocalyptic in the late antique Near East. For Robert Hoyland, this was a 'spirit', which 'early Islam seems to have caught';[40] for Fred Donner, 'apocalyptic ideas' were a particular feature of the religious climate of late antiquity, with an obvious appeal, given what he claims was the 'harsh' reality of life in the 'Byzantine domains'.[41] Finally, in John C. Reeves's guide to Jewish apocalypses, we read that the 'apocalyptic imagination' operated 'more or less continuously within the broader ethnic or religious framework of the wider Near East', and that in the seventh and later centuries it was 'figured as a mentality';[42] it was 'a type of narrative' within a 'formulaic set of conventions, tropes and figures'.

But there are problems here too. Certainly eschatological ideas were common, but it is another matter to argue that they were such a dominant feature of the period as to provide an impetus and explanation for Qur'anic themes whose emphasis is in fact very different. Further, the well-known Jewish apocalypses from the context of the Persian occupation of Jerusalem, and the later and perhaps even better-known Syriac apocalypses such as that of Pseudo Methodius, with their quasi-historical scenarios based on the four kingdoms of the book of Daniel, are both very different from the proclamations of the Hour in the Qur'an. Appeals to something that was allegedly 'in the air' in late antiquity do not seem to help very much.

In the final section of this paper I would like to turn – inevitably too briefly – to some examples from the side of patristic

[39] Shoemaker, 'Muhammad and the Qur'an'; Id., *The Death of a Prophet.*

[40] Hoyland, 'Early Islam as a late antique religion', p. 1066-1067.

[41] Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, p. 14-17.

[42] J. C. Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic. A Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalypse Reader*, Atlanta, 2003, p. 1-2, 4.

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

studies that I think are worth bringing into the discussion. They do not usually feature in studies by Islamicists. Yet the seventh century was an extraordinarily tense time for doctrinal and political developments within Christianity. These are obscured if the Arab conquest of Jerusalem in the 630s is taken as a chronological boundary, as it often has been, and they are also currently the subject of very active historical, as well as patristic, scholarship.

Leading some of these developments was Maximus Confessor, possibly the greatest of all Byzantine theologians, as well as being one of our earliest non-Muslim authors to indicate awareness of the Arab incursions.[43] Maximus was in North Africa in the 630s and early 640s, the latter also the decade of Leontius of Neapolis's *Lives* of Symeon the Fool and John the Almsgiver (appended to an earlier *Life* by Moschus and Sophronius). He went from Africa to Rome and was prominent in the Lateran Synod of 649, after which he was arrested by the imperial authorities, taken to Constantinople and made to face exile and death. It is perhaps understandable that most of the huge scholarly literature on Maximus detaches him from what I believe to be his Palestinian background (accepting the value of the hostile Monothelite *vita*), and deals with his writings only in theological terms. It is sometimes forgotten that Maximus was also a close associate of Sophronius, the future patriarch of Jerusalem, whose works extended much more widely than the field of technical theology: Sophronius was also close to John Moschus, author of the *Spiritual Meadow*, as explored in a classic article by Henry Chadwick, and now brought out in full detail by Phil Booth.[44] We do not read much in scholarship on early Islam about the monasteries of Palestine, which produced all these authors, and

[43] *Ep.* 14; see HOYLAND, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, p. 77-78.

[44] BOOTH, *Crisis of Empire*; cfr. H. CHADWICK, 'John Moschus and his friend Sophronius the sophist', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 25.1 (1974), p. 41-74 (repr. in *Doctrine and Debate in the East Christian World, 300-1500* – ed. A. Cameron, R. G. Hoyland, Farnham, 2011). On Sophronius see also P. BOOTH, 'Sophronius of Jerusalem and the end of Roman history', in *History and Identity in the Late Antique Near East* – ed. P. Wood, p. 1-27. An English translation of the Acts of the Lateran Synod of AD 649 by Richard Price, with contributions by Phil Booth and Catherine Cubitt, was published in 2014 in the series *Translated Texts for Historians*.

which were key centres of religious activism in the seventh century, but we probably ought to.

As for John of Damascus, later in the Umayyad period, most writers approach him simply as a Byzantine or patristic theologian, perhaps the last patristic theologian. He features straightforwardly as a Byzantine writer for Alexander Kazhdan, who memorably wrote: 'can we imagine [...] Byzantine literature without John Damaskenos?'[45] Andrew Louth, in his important book on John, offers a strongly monastic (and to me convincing) context for John's works.[46] At the same time, the question of whether John was in any sense an original theologian, or an original philosopher, has gained new attention, in the context of a renewed interest in investigating Byzantine philosophy as such, and especially the question of whether Byzantine philosophy is distinguishable from theology.[47] The traditional view of John has been that he has little to offer of interest to philosophers, and a recent article argues strongly that his major work, the *Pege gnoseos*, or *Fount of Knowledge*, is entirely derivative in nature;[48] the author does not consider the intriguing question of what the library resources might have been at the Mar Saba monastery in Palestine, but speculates that John might have had a copy of the work of the philosopher Stephanus. Indeed, there is some uncertainty, according to Marie-France Auzépy, about whether John was indeed a monk of Mar Saba, and problems about the sources for his biography which parallel those for Maximus.[49] We cannot – as many scholars do – assume without question the historicity of the later Arabic *vitae*, or fail to take

[45] A. P. Kazhdan, with L. F. Sherry and C. Angelidi, *A History of Byzantine Literature*, 650-850, Washington, D.C., 1999, p. 3, cfr. p. 74-79.

[46] A. Louth, *St John Damascene. Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology*, Oxford, 2002.

[47] For which see *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources* – ed. K. Ierodiakonou, Oxford, 2002; *The Many Faces of Byzantine Philosophy* – ed. B. Bydén, K. Ierodiakonou, Athens, 2012.

[48] J. A. Demetracopoulos, 'In search of the pagan and Christian sources of John of Damascus' theodicy: Ammonius, the Son of Hermeias, Stephanus of Athens and John Chrysostom on God's foreknowledge and predestination and man's freewill', in *Byzantine Theology and its Philosophical Background* – ed. A. Rigo, Turnhout, 2011, p. 50-88.

[49] See especially M.-F. Auzépy, 'De la Palestine à Constantinople: Étienne le Sabaïte et Jean Damascène', *Travaux et Mémoires*, 12 (1994), p. 183-218.

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

account of the strange silence about John in such sources as we do have for Mar Saba.[50]

John's three orations in defence of images are also of great importance, and again, they tend to feature in works on Byzantine iconoclasm without much discussion of the fact that few if any in Constantinople seem to have known the works themselves. On the other hand, Sidney Griffith has argued in complete contrast that John's target was nearer home, and that he must be understood in the local sphere of iconoclastic tendencies in the Umayyad context.[51] The fact is that we have no direct contemporary information about John himself. But with their emphasis on the issue of idolatry, his orations on religious images can be placed well within the tradition of the Christian *Adversus Iudaeos* tradition, which was such a key contemporary element, and which had already begun to incorporate images, that is icons, as an example of the created objects whose veneration Christians needed to defend. Finally, John's famous extra 'heresy' of Islam, the last chapter of his work on heresies, is usually discussed along with other non-Muslim 'sources for early Islam', when in fact it entirely fits the patristic and Byzantine structure and tradition of his catalogue of heresies.

These famous examples are indicative of the disciplinary divide I mentioned earlier. Whatever theory we adopt about the genesis of the Qur'an and the date of its collation, Islam was still taking shape during the very decades that saw particularly intense theological developments, debates and divisions among Christians. I will take as further examples the cult of the cross and that of the Virgin, which cannot be without interest in view of the presentation of Jesus, Mary, and the crucifixion in the Qur'an.

Again, Sidney Griffith is one of the scholars to whom we owe awareness of the centrality of the cross as a badge of Christian identity during the Umayyad period, especially

[50] The *Life* of Stephen the Sabaite (a younger contemporary of John) describes the monastic life at Mar Saba with no mention of John of Damascus; see M.-F. Auzépy, *La Vie d'Étienne le Jeune par Étienne le Diacre*, Aldershot, 1997.

[51] Recently, S. H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque. Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam*, Princeton, 2008, p. 40-42.

under ‘Abd al’Malik.[52] The Emperor Heraclius’s symbolic return to Jerusalem in 630 and his restoration of the fragments of the True Cross to Golgotha constituted a momentous act, on the very eve of the Arab invasions of Syria.[53] Somewhat less noted, but closer to the theme of patristic studies, is the distinct increase of emphasis on the cross in this period in liturgy and theological writing; the liturgical feast of the exaltation of the Cross on 14 September gained prominence, homilies were written on the theme of the cross, and the dead Christ began to appear for the first time in crucifixion scenes in eastern Christian visual art.[54] Sure indicators of a changing context, the Christian *Adversus Iudaeos* texts developed a comprehensive defence of the

[52] S.H. Griffith, ‘Images, Islam and Christian icons. A moment in the Christian/Muslim encounter in early Islamic times’, in *La Syrie de Byzance à l’Islam, VIIe-VIIIe siècles* (*Actes du colloque international, Lyon, Maison de l’Orient Méditerranéen, Paris: Institut du monde arabe, 11-15 sept. 1990*) – ed. P. Canivet, J.-P. Rey-Coquais, Damascus, 1992, p.122-138.

[53] Interpreted in apocalyptic terms by G.J. Reinink, ‘Heraclius, the new Alexander. Apocalyptic prophecies during the reign of Heraclius’, in *The Reign of Heraclius. Crisis and Confrontation (610-641)* – ed. G.J. Reinink, B.H. Stolte, Leuven, 2002, p. 81-94, but see Cameron, ‘Late antique apocalyptic’.

[54] Cult: A. Frolow, *La relique de la vraie Croix. Recherches sur le développement d’un culte,* Paris, 1961; homilies: R. Scott, ‘Alexander the Monk, *Discovery of the True Cross*’, Eng. trans. with notes, in *Metaphrastes, or, Gained in Translation* – ed. M. Mullett, Belfast, 2004, p. 157-184; partial ed. and trans. J. Nesbitt, ‘Alexander the monk’s text of Helena’s discovery of the True Cross (BHG 410)’, in *Byzantine Authors: Literary Activities and Preoccupations* – ed. J. Nesbitt, Leiden, 2003, p. 23-39; for a similar work in Syriac by Pantaleon (BHG 6430), see A. Di Berardino, *Patrologia V*, Torino, 2000, p. 299, and cfr. *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, p. 427; dead Christ: J.R. Martin, ‘The dead Christ on the cross in Byzantine art’, in *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend Jr.* – ed. K. Weitzmann, Princeton, 1955, p. 189-196; K. Corrigan, ‘Text and image on an icon of the crucifixion at Mount Sinai’, in *The Sacred Image East and West* – ed. R. Ousterhout, L. Brubaker, Urbana, Ill., 1995, p. 45-62; defence of representations of the crucifixion and of Christ’s real suffering on the Cross by Anastasius of Sinai: see A. Kartsonis, *Anastasis. The Making of an Image*, Princeton, 1986, p. 40- 67; Heraclius and the True Cross: C. Mango, ‘Deux études sur Byzance et la Perse sassanide’, *Travaux et Mémoires,* 9 (1985), p. 91-118; Id., ‘The Temple Mount, AD 614-638’, in *Bayt al-Maqdis, Part 1. ‘Abd al-Malik’s Jerusalem* – ed. J. Raby, J. Johns, Oxford, 1992, p. 1-16; A. Frolow, ‘La vraie Croix et les expéditions d’Héraclius en Perse’, *Revue des études byzantines*, 11 (1953), p. 88-105; the theme as part of Heraclius’s public image: Mary Whitby, ‘Defender of the Cross: George of Pisidia on Heraclius and his deputies’, in *The Propaganda of Power. The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity* – ed. Mary Whitby, Leiden, 1998, p. 247-273.

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

veneration of the physical wood of the Cross against the charge of idolatry, and in the eighth century the Cross was adopted by the iconoclasts in preference to the figural representation of the divine.[55] In the seventh century, Anastasius of Sinai had developed a striking defence of visual representations of the crucifixion and of Christ's real suffering on the Cross. To this we should add the debates about whether, and in what way, the divine nature of Christ had suffered on the Cross which had divided Christians in the sixth century and which continued to do so in the seventh,[56] when the intense anxieties about the exact relation between the human and divine natures of Christ were inextricably bound up with that of the physical reality of the crucifixion and the capacity of the divine to suffer. It is well known that visual art in the early Byzantine period had preferred not to depict the dead or suffering Christ on the cross, but just as canon 82 of the Council in Trullo (below) asserted the physical humanity of Christ, so too slowly more explicit portrayals of the crucifixion itself began to emerge.

Given such a context, the 'docetic' denial of the crucifixion in the Qur'an does not seem so surprising; it spoke to direct Christian concerns that had been manifested in the disputes since the late fifth century onwards about the addition to the *Trisagion*, and among the Julianist groups in the sixth century and later.[57] Babai the Great, for example, catholicos of the Church of the East, who died circa 628, was a strong opponent of the idea that God could suffer.[58] While it is certainly the case that docetic trends had been evident in the earliest period of Christianity,[59]

[55] See C. Barber, *Figure and Likeness. On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm,* Princeton, 2002, p. 83-105.

[56] Sixth century: see L. Van Rompay, 'Society and community in the Christian east', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* – ed. M. Maas, Cambridge, 2005, p. 239-266, in partic. p. 252-254.

[57] So also Griffith, 'Al-Nasara in the Qur'an', p. 32; Julianists: see Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam*, p. 32.

[58] See J.T. Walker, 'A saint and his biographer in late antique Iraq: the *History of St George of Izla* (†614) by Babai the Great', in *Writing 'True Stories'. Historians and Hagiographers in the Late Antique and Medieval Near East* – ed. A. Papaconstantinou, with M. Debié and H. Kennedy, Turnhout, 2010, p. 31-41.

[59] R. Goldstein, G.G. Stroumsa, 'The Greek and Jewish origins of docetism: a new proposal', *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum*, 10.3 (2007),

the contemporary debates about whether God could suffer (and whether God could be divided or have a son) provide a more immediate and closer context. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that eastern Christianity in the sixth and seventh centuries saw a resurgence of old anxieties and old disputes which focused on Christological issues still unresolved after Chalcedon.

Yet another feature of late sixth- and early seventh-century Christianity was a growing emphasis on the power of saints among Christians, as can be seen in the proliferation of saints' lives and miracle collections in Greek, Syriac, and the other languages of eastern Christianity.[60] This caused some to question the saints' power of intercession and the value of their relics; at the same time appearances of saints in visions, and miracles associated with their pictures, were accompanied by anxiety as to the proper visual representation of holy personages. In the late seventh century the famous canon 82 of the Council in Trullo (691-92) sought to regulate the depiction of Christ by requiring Him to be depicted in the flesh, and forbidding Him to be represented symbolically as a lamb, thus asserting the reality of his human nature and suffering.[61] Again, this speaks to

p. 423-441; G. G. Stroumsa, 'Christ's laughter: docetic origins reconsidered', *Journal of Early Christian Studies,* 12.3 (2004), p. 267-88.

[60] See S. Efthymiades, V. Déroche, with contributions by A. Binggeli and Z. Aínalis, 'Greek hagiography in late antiquity (fourth–seventh centuries)', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography* – ed. S. Efthymiades, 2 vols., Farnham, 2011, I, p. 35-94; S. P. Brock, 'Syriac hagiography', *ibid*., p. 259-83, both with bibliographies; M. Debié, 'Writing history as 'histoires': the biographic dimension of East Syriac hagiography', in *Writing 'True Stories': Historians and Hagiographers in the late Antique and Medieval near East* (*Cultural Encounters in late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, 9) – ed. A. Papaconstantinou, M. Debié, H. Kennedy, Turnhout, 2010, p. 43-75.

[61] Doubts as to the efficacy of saints: *An Age of Saints? Power, Conflict and Dissent in Early Medieval Christianity* – ed. P. Sarris, M. Dal Santo, P. Booth, Leiden, 2011; anxieties about representation: G. Dagron, 'Iconophobie et iconodulie', in G. Dagron, *Décrire et peindre. Essai sur le portrait iconique*, Paris, 2007, p. 41-63, where this is linked to the issues raised in the Christian *Adversus Iudaeos* literature; V. Déroche, 'Tensions et contradictions dans les recueils de miracles de la première époque byzantine', in *Miracle et Karama. Hagiographies médiévales comparées* – ed. D. Aigle, Turnhout, 2000, p. 145-163; Averil Cameron, 'The language of images; icons and Christian representation', in *The Church and the Arts* (*Studies in Church History*, 28) – ed. D. Wood, Oxford, 1992, p. 1-42; Barber, *Figure and Likeness*; H. Maguire, *The Icons of their Bodies: Saints and their Images in Byzantium*, Princeton, 1996.

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

the docetic and anti-docetic debates, while the anxieties surrounding the proliferation of saints' cults speak to the Qur'anic insistence on an uncompromising monotheism. Finally, in relation to symbolic interpretations, we can point to the theology of Maximus Confessor's *Mystagogia*, a work of the 630s, as being expressive of contemporary preoccupations with representation, in its emphasis on symbolic or mystical interpretation, applied by Maximus to the liturgy.[62]

Yet another developing feature in late patristic Christianity concerns the cult of the Virgin, well documented in many recent scholarly contributions. Leslie Brubaker, indeed, would deny any cult of the Virgin until after about 680, but the proliferation of images and anecdotes tell a different story.[63] Stephen Shoemaker, whose work I cited earlier, has also recently translated the earliest hagiographical *Life of the Virgin*, which he thinks might have been composed by Maximus the Confessor himself, but which in any case he dates to this period.[64] The Virgin features frequently in contemporary anecdotes about miracles and apparitions, and was also often depicted in visual art, not merely in apse mosaics but also in small objects, ivories, and indeed icons.[65]

[62] Maximus, *Mystagogia*, *PG* 91, 657-717; Cameron, 'The language of images', p. 24-40.

[63] L. Brubaker has championed the view that relics were initially more important and that images did not become problematic until the late seventh century, before which there was also no cult of the Virgin: see L. Brubaker, 'Introduction', in *The Sacred Image East and West* – ed. R. Ousterhout, L. Brubaker, Chicago, 1995, p. 1-24; Id., 'Icons before iconoclasm', in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e also medioevo (XLV Settimane internazionale di studi sull'alto Medioevo)*, Spoleto, 1998, p. 1215-1254; also in L. Brubaker, J.F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c. 680-850. A History*, Cambridge, 2011, but see Averil Cameron, 'The anxiety of images: meanings and material objects', in *Images of the Byzantine World: Visions, Messages and Meanings. Studies presented to Leslie Brubaker* – ed. A. Lymberopoulou, Farnham, 2011, p. 47-56. The underlying question relates to the definition of 'cult', perhaps in fact a word better avoided in this connection.

[64] S.J. Shoemaker, *The Life of the Virgin. Maximus Confessor*, trans. with introduction and notes, New Haven, 2012, and see further *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* – ed. M. Vassilaki, Milan, 2000; *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium. Texts and Images* – ed. L. Brubaker, M. Cunningham, Farnham, 2011; B. V. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium*, University Park, PA, 2006.

[65] The earliest surviving assemblage of icons of the Virgin (panel paintings, mosaics and frescoes) is to be found in Rome, not in Constantinople, for reasons

Her exact role was crucial to any debate about the nature of the Incarnation and in particular the divine and human natures of Christ. Surely our understanding of the Qur'anic portrayal of Mary can only be deepened by awareness of these contemporary developments within Christianity, which went in parallel with renewed and agonizing anxieties about the real suffering and death of Christ.

I would argue therefore that while a great deal of attention has been paid by scholars to the Christian and Jewish reactions to the Persian invasions of the early seventh century, and especially to the capture of Jerusalem in 614, much less effort has been expended on the theological developments of the succeeding period and their relevance to the emerging Muslim system. Possible 'influences' were multiple, as we have seen. But I would also like to argue for a more holistic view, which neither detaches the theology of such figures as Sophronius, Maximus, and John of Damascus from their near Eastern background nor sees the non-Muslim writers of the period primarily as 'sources' for early Islam. Nor, as I have argued, need we posit unattested groups of heterodox Christians who might have conveyed their views to the emerging Muslim community.

In his recent book, *The Death of a Prophet*, to which I have already alluded, the patristic scholar Stephen Shoemaker has made a forceful case for an early stage of Islam which focused on Jerusalem and the Temple. He is not the first to make such a case, and if it were widely accepted it would force us to rethink not only Islamic origins but also Christian and Jewish thinking in the seventh century, in the period after the conquests. I leave this argument aside for now, because Shoemaker's book also raises deeper questions about methodology, in particular in relation to the case he makes for the application of the methods of New Testament and Biblical criticism to Islamic origins.[66] Even if one is not convinced by all his central arguments, his book challenges

to do with the history of both cities; one can also cite the well-known icon of the Virgin and saints at St Catherine's, Sinai, often dated to the sixth century; for apses, see B. Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon. An Historical Perspective of the Apse as a Space for Images*, Wiesbaden, 2010.

[66] In the course of which he gives a very useful and detailed overview of scholarship on early Islam, past and present.

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

us as patristic scholars to cross the divide, to think outside the box, to review our disciplinary boundaries, and that can only be good.

In this paper I avoided the question of direct 'borrowings', and still more of 'sources' for elements in the Qur'an. Nor have I ventured into the complex issue of the latter's date and environment. Nor have I aligned myself with the 'sceptics' who see it as essentially deriving from a Jewish or Christian background. But it is perhaps worth reiterating the surprising silences in the Qur'anic text – most of all, about the life and actual context of Muhammad and his message. I want to suggest that if Islam is really a 'religion of late antiquity', there are other ways of looking at it than by general assertions about monotheism or apocalyptic. The alignment of Islam with a late antique context set out in the recent book by Aziz al-Azmeh takes us even further from the commonly expressed arguments I have discussed here, and will need much closer attention from late antique scholars. At the same time, patristic studies, a discipline that has been greatly enriched in current scholarship by being extended into the worlds of Sasanian Persia and neighbouring eastern cultures, would benefit, I believe, if it took more note of the debates and questions about the beginnings of Islam.

Bibliography

C. Addey rec., *One God. Pagan Monotheism in the Roman* – ed. S. Mitchell, P. Van Nuffelen, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 101 (2011), p. 259-260.

A. al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity. Allah and His People*, Cambridge, 2014.

A. al-Azmeh, *Rom, das Neue Rom und Baghdad. Pfade der Spätantike* (*Carl Heinrich Becker Lecture 2008*), Berlin, 2008.

An Age of Saints? Power, Conflict and Dissent in Early Medieval Christianity – ed. P. Sarris, M. Dal Santo, P. Booth, Leiden, 2011.

P. Athanassiadi, *La lutte pour l'orthodoxie dans le platonisme tardif de Numénius à Damascius*, Paris, 2006.

M.-F. Auzépy, *La Vie d'Étienne le Jeune par Étienne le Diacre*, Aldershot, 1997.

M.-F. Auzépy, 'De la Palestine à Constantinople: Étienne le Sabaïte et Jean Damascène', *Travaux et Mémoires*, 12 (1994), p. 183-218.

C. Barber, *Figure and Likeness. On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm*, Princeton, 2002.

P. Booth, *Crisis of Empire. Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Antiquity*, Berkeley, 2013.

P. Booth, 'Sophronius of Jerusalem and the end of Roman history', in *History and Identity in the Late Antique Near East* – ed. P. Wood, Oxford, 2013, p. 1-27.

G. W. Bowersock, *The Throne of Adulis. Red Sea Wars on the Eve of Islam*, New York, 2013.

G. W. Bowersock, *Empires in Collision in Late Antiquity* (*The Menahem Stern Jerusalem Lectures 2011*), Waltham, MA, 2012.

G. W. Bowersock, 'Polytheism and monotheism in Arabia and the three Palestines', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 51 (1997), p. 1-10.

B. Brenk, *The Apse, the Image and the Icon. An Historical Perspective of the Apse as a Space for Images*, Wiesbaden, 2010.

S. P. Brock, 'Syriac hagiography', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography* – ed. S. Efthymiades, 2 vols., Farnham, 2011, I, p. 259-283.

L. Brubaker, 'Introduction', in *The Sacred Image East and West* – ed. R. Ousterhout, L. Brubaker, Chicago, 1995, p. 1-24.

L. Brubaker, 'Icons before iconoclasm', in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e also medioevo* (*XLV Settimane internazionale di studi sull'alto Medioevo*), Spoleto, 1998, p. 1215-1254.

L. Brubaker, J. F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c. 680-850. A History*, Cambridge, 2011.

Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources – ed. K. Ierodiakonou, Oxford, 2002.

Averil Cameron, 'Late antique apocalyptic: a context for the Qur'an?', in *Visions of the End* – ed. E. Grypeou, Leuven, forthcoming.

Averil Cameron, *Dialoguing in Late Antiquity*, Washington, D.C., 2014.

Averil Cameron, 'The anxiety of images: meanings and material objects', in *Images of the Byzantine World. Visions, Messages and Meanings. Studies presented to Leslie Brubaker* – ed. A. Lymberopoulou, Farnham, 2011, p. 47-56.

Averil Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity, AD 395-700*, rev. ed., London, 2011.

Averil Cameron, 'The language of images; icons and Christian representation', in *The Church and the Arts* (*Studies in Church History*, 28) – ed. D. Wood, Oxford, 1992, p. 1-42.

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

H. Chadwick, 'John Moschus and his friend Sophronius the sophist', *Journal of Theological Studies,* 25.1 (1974), p. 41-74 (repr. in *Doctrine and Debate in the East Christian World, 300-1500* – ed. Averil Cameron, R. G. Hoyland, Farnham, 2011).

Christian and Muslim Relations, a Bibliographical History (The History of Christian-Muslim Relations), 5 vols. – ed. D. Thomas, Leiden, 2009-2013.

Christians and Muslims in Dialogue in the Islamic Orient of the Middle Ages – ed. M. Tamcke, Beirut, Würzburg, 2007.

K. Corrigan, 'Text and image on an icon of the crucifixion at Mount Sinai', in *The Sacred Image East and West* – ed. R. Ousterhout, L. Brubaker, Urbana, Ill., 1995, p. 45-62.

P. Crone, 'The religion of the Qur'anic pagans: God and the lesser deities', *Arabica*, 57 (2010), p. 151-200.

P. Crone, M. Cook, *Hagarism. The Making of the Islamic World*, Cambridge, 1977.

The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium. Texts and Images – ed. L. Brubaker, M. Cunningham, Farnham, 2011.

G. Dagron, *Décrire et peindre. Essai sur le portrait iconique*, Paris, 2007, p. 41-63.

M. Debié, 'Writing history as 'histoires': the biographic dimension of East Syriac hagiography', in *Writing 'True Stories'. Historians and Hagiographers in the Late Antique and Medieval Near East* (*Cultural Encounters in late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, 9) – ed. A. Papaconstantinou, M. Debié, H. Kennedy, Turnhout, 2010, p. 43-75.

F. De Blois, 'Islam in its Arabian context', in *The Qur'an in Context* – ed. A. Neuwirth, N. Sinai, M. Marx, Leiden, 2010, p. 615-623.

F. De Blois, 'Elchasai – Manes – Muhammad: Manichäismus und Islam inreligionshistorischen Vergleich', *Der Islam*, 81 (2004), p. 31-48.

J. A. Demetracopoulos, 'In search of the pagan and Christian sources of John of Damascus' theodicy: Ammonius, the Son of Hermeias, Stephanus of Athens and John Chrysostom on God's foreknowledge and predestination and man's freewill', in *Byzantine Theology and its Philosophical Background* – ed. A. Rigo, Turnhout, 2011, p. 50-88.

V. Déroche, 'Tensions et contradictions dans les recueils de miracles de la première époque byzantine', in *Miracle et Karama. Hagiographies médiévales comparées* – ed. D. Aigle, Turnhout, 2000, p. 145-163.

V. Déroche, 'Polémique anti-Judaïque et emergence de l'Islam (VIIe-VIIIe siècles)', *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 57 (1999), p. 141-161.

F. M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers. At the Origins of Islam*, Cambridge, MA, 2010.

F. M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins. The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*, Princeton, 1998.

S. Efthymiades, V. Déroche, with contributions by A. Binggeli and Z. Aínalis, 'Greek hagiography in late antiquity (fourth-seventh centuries)', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography* – ed. S. Efthymiades, 2 vols., Farnham, 2011, I, p. 35-94.

The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam – ed. E. Grypeou, M. Swanson, D. Thomas, Leiden, 2006.

B. Finster, 'Arabia in late antiquity: an outline of the cultural situation in the peninsula at the time of Muhammad', in *The Qur'an in Context* – ed. A. Neuwirth, N. Sinai, N. Marx, Leiden, 2010, p. 61-107.

G. Fisher, *Between Empires. Arabs, Romans and Sasanians in Late Antiquity*, Oxford, 2011.

G. Fowden, *Before and After Muhammad. The First Millenium Refocused*, Princeton, 2013.

G. Fowden, 'The Umayyad horizon', *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 25.2 (2012), p. 974-82.

G. Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth. Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, Princeton, 1993.

A. Frolow, *La relique de la vraie Croix. Recherches sur le développement d'un culte*, Paris, 1961.

A. Frolow, 'La vraie Croix et les expéditions d'Héraclius en Perse', *Revue des études byzantines*, 11 (1953), p. 88-105.

J. Gager, 'Did Jewish-Christians see the rise of Islam?', in *The Ways that Never Parted. Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* – ed. A. H. Becker, A. Yoshiko Reed, Tübingen, 2003, p. 361-372.

I. Gajda, *Le royaume de Himyar à l'époque monothéiste*, Paris, 2009.

R. Goldstein, G. G. Stroumsa, 'The Greek and Jewish origins of docetism: a new proposal', *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum*, 10.3 (2007), p. 423-441.

S. H. Griffith, 'Al-Nasara in the Qur'an: a hermeneutical reflection', in *New Perspectives on the Qur'an* – ed. G. S. Reynolds, London, 2011, p. 1-38.

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

S. H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque. Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam*, Princeton, 2008, p. 40-42.

S. H. Griffith, 'Images, Islam and Christian icons. A moment in the Christian/Muslim encounter in early Islamic times', in *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam, VIIe-VIIIe siècles* (*Actes du colloque international, Lyon, Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen, Paris. Institut du monde arabe, 11-15 sept. 1990*) – ed. P. Canivet, J.-P. Rey-Coquais, Damascus, 1992, p.122-138.

S. H. Griffith, 'Anastasius of Sinai, the *Hodegos* and the Muslims', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 32.4 (1987), p. 341-358.

T. Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam. Verbreitung und konfessionelle Zugehörigkeit: eine Hinführung* (*Eastern Christian Studies*, 7), Leuven, Dudley, MA, 2007.

G. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam. From Polemic to History*, Cambridge, 1999.

R. G. Hoyland, 'Islam as a late antique religion', in *Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* – ed. S. F. Johnson, New York, 2012, p. 1053-1077.

R. G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs. From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, Oxford, 2001.

R. G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It. A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (*Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, 13), Princeton, 1997.

Juifs et chrétiens en Arabie aux Ve et VIe siècles: regards croisés sur les sources (*Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, monographies* 32, *Le massacre de Najran* II) – ed. J. Beaucamp, F. Briquel-Chatonnet, C. J. Robin, Paris, 2010.

A. Kartsonis, *Anastasis. The Making of an Image*, Princeton, 1986.

A. P. Kazhdan, with Lee F. Sherry and C. Angelidi, *A History of Byzantine Literature, 650-850*, Washington, D.C., 1999.

G. R. D. King, 'Settlement in western and central Arabia and the Gulf in the sixth-eighth centuries A.D.', in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East II. Land Use and Settlement Patterns* – ed. G. R. D. King, Averil Cameron, Princeton, 1994, p. 181-212.

Late Antiquity on the Eve of Islam – ed. Averil Cameron, Farnham, 2013.

R. Le Coz, *Jean Damascène. Écrits sur l'Islam* (*SC*, 383), Paris, 1992.

A. Louth, *St John Damascene. Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology*, Oxford, 2002.

C. Luxenburg, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran. Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koranssprache*, rev. ed., Berlin, 2004 [Eng. trans.:

Id., *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran. A Contribution to the Decoding of the Language of the Koran*, Berlin, 2007].

H. Maguire, *The Icons of their Bodies. Saints and their Images in Byzantium*, Princeton, 1996.

C. Mango, 'The Temple Mount, AD 614-638', in *Bayt al-Maqdis. 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem* I – ed. J. Raby, J. Johns, Oxford, 1992, p. 1-16.

C. Mango, 'Deux études sur Byzance et la Perse sassanide', *Travaux et Mémoires*, 9 (1985), p. 91-118.

The Many Faces of Byzantine Philosophy – ed. B. Bydén, K. Ierodiakonou, Athens, 2012.

J. R. Martin, 'The dead Christ on the cross in Byzantine art', in *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend Jr.* – ed. K. Weitzmann, Princeton, 1955, p. 189-196.

F. Millar, *Religion, Language and Community in the Roman Near East. Constantine to Muhammad*, Oxford, 2014.

Monotheism between Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity – ed. S. Mitchell, P. Van Nuffelen, Leuven, 2010.

M. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, Princeton, 1984.

Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art – ed. M. Vassilaki, Milan, 2000.

J. Nesbitt, 'Alexander the monk's text of Helena's discovery of the True Cross (BHG, 410)', in *Byzantine Authors. Literary Activities and Preoccupations* – ed. J. Nesbitt, Leiden, 2003, p. 23-39.

A. Neuwirth, *Der Koran als Text der Spätantike. Ein europäischer Zugang*, Berlin, 2010.

New Perspectives on the Qur'an. The Qur'an in its Historical Context 2 – ed. G. S. Reynolds, London, 2011.

One God. Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire – ed. S. Mitchell, P. Van Nuffelen, Cambridge, 2010.

Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity – ed. S. F. Johnson, New York, 2012.

Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity – ed. P. Athanassiadi, M. Frede, Oxford, 1999.

B. V. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium*, University Park, Penn., 2006.

D. Potts, *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity*, 2 vols., Oxford, 1990, II.

R. Price, 'Monothelitism: a heresy or a form of words?', *Studia Patristica*, 48 (2010), p. 221-32.

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.

The Qur'an in Context. Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'anic Milieu – ed. A. Neuwirth, N. Sinai, M. Marx, Leiden, 2010.

The Qur'an in its Historical Context – ed. G. S. Reynolds, London, 2008.

J. C. Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic. A Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalypse Reader*, Atlanta, 2003.

G. J. Reinink, 'Heraclius, the new Alexander. Apocalyptic prophecies during the reign of Heraclius', in *The Reign of Heraclius. Crisis and Confrontation (610-641)* – ed. G. J. Reinink, B. H. Stolte, Leuven, 2002, p. 81-94.

C. Robin, 'Arabia and Ethiopia', in *Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* – ed. S. F. Johnson, New York, 2012, p. 247-332.

R. Scott, 'Alexander the Monk, *Discovery of the True Cross*', Eng. trans. with notes, in *Metaphrastes, or, Gained in Translation* – ed. M. Mullett, Belfast, 2004, p. 157-184.

I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs*, Washington, D.C., 1984-.

S. J. Shoemaker, *Death of a Prophet*, Philadelphia, 2012.

S. J. Shoemaker, 'Muhammad and the Qur'an', in *Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* – ed. S. F. Johnson, New York, 2012, p. 1078-1108.

S. J. Shoemaker, *The Life of the Virgin. Maximus Confessor*, trans. with introduction and notes, New Haven, 2012.

A. M. Sivertsev, *Judaism and Imperial Ideology in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge, 2011.

T. Sizgorich, 'Narrative and community in Islamic late antiquity', *Past and Present*, 185.1 (2004), p. 9-42.

M.-J. Steve, *L'île de Kharg: une page de l'histoire du Golfe Persique et du monachisme oriental*, Neuchâtel, 2003.

G. G. Stroumsa, 'Jewish Christianity and Islamic origins', in *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts. Essays in Honor of Patricia Crone* – ed. B. Sadeghi et al., Leiden, 2014, p. 72-96.

G. G. Stroumsa, 'Athens, Jerusalem and Mecca: the patristic crucible of the Abrahamic religions', *Studia Patristica*, 62.10 (2013), p. 153-168.

G. G. Stroumsa, 'False prophets of early Christianity', in *Priests and Prophets among Pagans, Jews and Christians* – ed. B. Dignas, R. Parker, G. G. Stroumsa, Leuven, 2013, p. 208-232.

G. G. Stroumsa, 'Barbarians or heretics? Jews and Arabs in the mind of Byzantium (fourth to eighth centuries)', in *Jews in Byzantium.*

Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures – ed. R. Bonfil et al., Leiden, 2012, p. 761-776.

G. G. STROUMSA, 'Christ's laughter: docetic origins reconsidered', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 12.3 (2004), p. 267-88.

J. TANNOUS, 'You are what you read. Qenneshre and the Miaphysite church in the seventh century', in *History and Identity in the Late Antique Near East* – ed. P. Wood, Oxford, 2013, p. 83-102.

L. VAN ROMPAY, 'Society and community in the Christian east', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* – ed. M. Maas, Cambridge, 2005, p. 239-266.

J. T. WALKER, 'A saint and his biographer in late antique Iraq: the *History of St George of Izla* († 614) by Babai the Great', in *Writing 'True Stories'. Historians and Hagiographers in the Late Antique and Medieval Near East* – ed. A. Papaconstantinou, with M. Debié and H. Kennedy, Turnhout, 2010, p. 31-41.

J. T. WALKER, *The Legend of Mar Qardagh. Narrative and Christian Heroism in Late Antique Iraq*, Berkeley, 2006.

J. E. WANSBOROUGH, *The Sectarian Milieu. Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*, Oxford, 1978.

MARY WHITBY, 'Defender of the Cross: George of Pisidia on Heraclius and his deputies', in *The Propaganda of Power. The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity* – ed. Mary Whitby, Leiden, 1998, p. 247-273.

P. WOOD, *'We have no King but Christ.'*, in *Christian Political Thought in Greater Syria on the Eve of the Arab Conquest (c. 400-585)*, Oxford, 2010.

Abstract

This paper argues for a closer engagement by patristic scholarship with the issues and problems about the emergence of Islam. It starts by discussing recent trends among historians of late antiquity and Islamicists alike to reconceive early Islam as a late antique religion, and moves to suggest that what we now know about the historical background, together with the intense theological debates that were going on among Christians in the eastern Mediterranean during the sixth and seventh centuries provide a 'thick' context for Qur'anic themes. Especially (but not only) in view of the recent tendency to absorb early Islam into late antiquity, patristic scholarship and Qur'anic and early Islamic scholarship would do well to come closer together.

© BREPOLS PUBLISHERS
THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE PRINTED FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY.
IT MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER.